

Fact Sheet

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READY BUSINESS

The U.S. Department of Homeland Security and the Advertising Council launched the *Ready Business* campaign in September 2004. This extension of Homeland Security's successful *Ready* campaign, designed to educate and empower Americans to prepare for and respond to potential terrorist attacks and other emergencies, focuses specifically on business preparedness. *Ready Business* helps owners and managers of small to medium-sized businesses prepare their employees, operations and assets in the event of an emergency.

- The goal of *Ready Business* is to raise the business community's awareness of the need for emergency planning and motivate businesses to take action. The campaign encourages business owners and managers to: plan to stay in business; talk to their employees; and protect their investment.
- Emergencies, including natural disasters and potential terrorist attacks, can paralyze business operations. Small to medium-sized businesses in particular are most vulnerable to these events. Having an emergency plan can help protect a company and maximize its potential to survive and recover after an incident.
- According to the U.S. Small Business Administration, small businesses represent more than 99 percent of all employers; provide approximately 75 percent of the net new jobs added to the economy; and represent 97 percent of all U.S. exporters. If these businesses are prepared to survive and recover, the nation and the economy are more secure.
- Although most businesses agree emergency preparedness is important, too few are taking the necessary steps to prepare. According to an October 2005 survey of small businesses conducted by The Ad Council, 92 percent of respondents said that it is very or somewhat important for businesses to take steps to prepare for a catastrophic disaster, such as an earthquake, hurricane or terrorist attack and 88 percent agreed that having a business continuity plan would make good sense for their company. However, only 39 percent said that their company has an emergency plan in place and only 59 percent assessed their own business as prepared in the event of a catastrophic disaster. Qualitative research with this audience demonstrated that even though many acknowledge the value of preparedness, they see time, workforce and money constraints prohibiting them from developing a business continuity plan.

- *Ready Business* is designed to assist small and medium-sized businesses in developing emergency preparedness plans. The campaign's messages are delivered through a website (www.ready.gov), brochures, radio, print and Internet advertisements, as well as key partnerships. These materials provide businesses with practical steps and easy-to-use templates that include information on creating an evacuation plan; fire safety; including employees throughout the process; considering people with special needs; and protecting business investments by securing facilities and equipment and reviewing insurance coverage.
- Since its launch in September 2004, the *Ready Business* effort has received more than \$11 million in donated media support, and its website has received more than more than 6.8 million hits and over 154,000 unique visitors.
- *Ready Business* is funded by Homeland Security's Office of Infrastructure Protection. The initiative was developed and launched in partnership with:
 - U.S. Chamber of Commerce
 - Small Business Administration
 - Society of Human Resource Management
 - The Business Roundtable
 - The 9/11 Public Discourse Project
 - ASIS International
 - Business Executives for National Security
 - International Safety Equipment Association
 - International Security Management Association
 - National Association of Manufacturers
 - National Federation of Independent Businesses
 - Occupational Safety and Health Administration

The U.S. Department of Homeland Security and The Advertising Council launched Ready Business in September 2004. This extension of Homeland Security's successful Ready campaign, which has helped millions of individuals and families prepare for emergencies, focuses on business preparedness. Ready Business helps owners and managers of small to medium-sized businesses prepare their employees, operations and assets in the event of an emergency. Visit www.Ready.gov for more information.

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